Remarks

Claims 1-33 are now pending in this application. Claims 1-35 are rejected. Claims 34 and 35 have been canceled without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer. Claims 1, 13-15, 19, 20, 22, 23, and 30 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action mailed June 14, 2004 does not acknowledge a claim for priority, under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119(e), made in the above-referenced patent application. Applicants respectfully re-submit that although the Office Action mailed on November 11, 2003 acknowledges a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121, the conditions specified in 35 U.S.C. 120 are for the benefit claim of a prior nonprovisional application and the conditions specified in 35 U.S.C. 119(e) are for the priority claims of a prior provisional application (MPEP 201.11). Applicants respectfully re-submit that the above-referenced patent application claims priority to a U.S. provisional patent application with serial number 60/173,844 filed on December 30, 1999 (specification, page 1). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that an Office Action reflect that the above-referenced patent application makes a claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119(e) and not under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Applicants respectfully traverse the objection to the title. Applicants have amended the title. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the title be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1-32 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Leshem et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,341,310) is respectfully traversed.

Leshem et al. describe Astra, a software package, which provides an ability to track user (visitor) activity and behavior patterns with respect to a web site and to graphically display the information (using color coding, annotations, etc.) on a site map (column 27, lines 63-66). Astra uses information contained within a log file in combination with an associated site graph to determine probable paths taken by visitors to the web site (column 28, lines 26-30). The log file includes information about accesses to the web site by users (column 28, lines 12-13). Each entry (line) in

the log file represents a successful access to the web site, and contains various information about an access event (column 28, lines 19-21). This information normally includes a path to an accessed URL, an identifier of a user (typically in a form of an IP address), and a date and time of the access (column 28, lines 21-24). By performing this method for each visitor represented in the log file and appropriately combining information of all of the visitors, Astra generates statistical data (such as the number of "hits" or the number of exit events) with respect to each link and node of the web site, and attaches this information to the corresponding node and edge objects (115, 116) of a site graph (114) (column 28, lines 43-50). Each site graph object corresponds generally to a map of the web site, and includes information about URLs and links of the web site (column 19, lines 29-33).

Claim 1 recites a method for facilitating Web-based information exchange, the method comprising "providing a centralized Web structure for the Web-based information of an organization, the Web structure comprising a plurality of Web sites linked together to form the Web structure; identifying a user requesting access to the Web structure by a password that is configured to be used for a limited time; and tracking, via the Web structure, a shift of responsibility of making a first decision on a funding request from a first user to a second user, wherein the shift occurs when a second decision is made on the funding request by the first user."

Leshem et al. do not describe or suggest a method for facilitating Web-based information exchange as recited in Claim 1. Specifically, Leshem et al. do not describe or suggest identifying a user requesting access to the Web structure by a password that is configured to be used for a limited time, and tracking, via the Web structure, a shift of responsibility of making a first decision on a funding request from a first user to a second user, where the shift occurs when a second decision is made on the funding request by the first user. Rather, Leshem et al. describe generating statistical data, such as, a number of "hits" or a number of exit events, with respect to each link and node of a web site, and attaching this information to corresponding node and edge objects of a site graph. Each site graph object corresponds generally to a map of the web site, and includes information about URLs and links of the web site. Accordingly, Leshem et al. do not describe or suggest tracking, via the Web structure, a shift of responsibility of making a first decision on a funding request from a first

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user to a second user, where the shift occurs when a second decision is made on the funding request by the first user. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Leshem et al.

Claims 2-12 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 2-12 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that Claims 2-12 likewise are patentable over Leshem et al.

Claim 13 recites a method for facilitating Web-based information exchange, the method comprising "providing one Web structure for storing the Web-based information of a business; and electronically tracking, via a Web-based application, actions that include a decision regarding implementing an idea and a decision regarding obtaining funding to implement the idea, wherein one of the actions occurs at a level within the business that is separate from any other levels within the business in which remaining of the actions occur."

Leshem et al. do not describe or suggest a method for facilitating Web-based information exchange as recited in Claim 13. Specifically, Leshem et al. do not describe or suggest electronically tracking, via a Web-based application, actions that include a decision regarding implementing an idea and a decision regarding obtaining funding to implement the idea, where one of the actions occurs at a level within the business that is separate from any other levels within the business in which remaining of the actions occur. Rather, Leshem et al. describe generating statistical data, such as, a number of "hits" or a number of exit events, with respect to each link and node of a web site, and attaching this information to corresponding node and edge objects of a site graph. Each site graph object corresponds generally to a map of the web site, and includes information about URLs and links of the web site. Accordingly, Leshem et al. do not describe or suggest electronically tracking, via a Web-based application, actions that include a decision regarding implementing an idea and a decision regarding obtaining funding to implement the idea, where one of the actions occurs at a level within the business that is separate from any other levels within the business in which remaining of the actions occur. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 13 is submitted to be patentable over Leshem et al.

Claims 14-18 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 13. When the recitations of Claims 14-18 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 13, Applicants submit that Claims 14-18 likewise are patentable over Leshem et al.

Claim 19 recites a method for facilitating computer network-based information exchange, the method comprising the steps of "providing a plurality of sites for containing network-based information on a central server; linking the plurality of sites to one another so that any one of the sites is at least indirectly accessible from any one of the remaining sites; naming each of the plurality of sites on the central server wherein all of the plurality of names are based on a common theme and wherein each name identifies the network-based information stored at each site; identifying a user requesting access to one of the sites by a password that is configured to be used for a limited time; and tracking, via the sites, a shift of responsibility of making a first decision on a funding request from a first user to a second user, wherein the shift occurs when a second decision is made on the funding request by the first user, and the first decision is made at a level within a business that is separate from other levels within the business at which the second decision is made."

Leshem et al. do not describe or suggest a method for facilitating computer network-based information exchange as recited in Claim 19. Specifically, Leshem et al. do not describe or suggest identifying a user requesting access to one of the sites by a password that is configured to be used for a limited time, and tracking, via the sites, a shift of responsibility of making a first decision on a funding request from a first user to a second user, where the shift occurs when a second decision is made on the funding request by the first user, and the first decision is made at a level within a business that is separate from other levels within the business at which the second decision is made. Rather, Leshem et al. describe generating statistical data, such as, a number of "hits" or a number of exit events, with respect to each link and node of a web site, and attaching this information to corresponding node and edge objects of a site graph. Each site graph object corresponds generally to a map of the web site, and includes information about URLs and links of the web site. Accordingly, Leshem et al. do not describe or suggest tracking, via the sites, a shift of responsibility of making

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a first decision on a funding request from a first user to a second user, where the shift occurs when a second decision is made on the funding request by the first user, and the first decision is made at a level within a business that is separate from other levels within the business at which the second decision is made. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 19 is submitted to be patentable over Leshem et al.

Claim 20 recites a system for facilitating Web-based information exchange, the system comprising "a device; and a server connected to said device and configured to: provide a Web-based application including a centralized Web structure for Web-based information of a business, the Web structure comprising a plurality of Web sites linked together to form the Web structure; and electronically track, via the Web-based application, actions that include a decision regarding reviewing an idea and a decision regarding obtaining funding to implement the idea, wherein one of the actions occurs at a level within the business that is separate from any other levels within the business in which remaining of the actions occur."

Leshem et al. do not describe or suggest a system for facilitating Web-based information exchange as recited in Claim 20. Specifically, Leshem et al. do not describe or suggest a server configured to electronically track, via the Web-based application, actions that include a decision regarding reviewing an idea and a decision regarding obtaining funding to implement the idea, wherein one of the actions occurs at a level within the business that is separate from any other levels within the business in which remaining of the actions occur. Rather, Leshem et al. describe generating statistical data, such as, a number of "hits" or a number of exit events, with respect to each link and node of a web site, and attaching this information to corresponding node and edge objects of a site graph. Each site graph object corresponds generally to a map of the web site, and includes information about URLs and links of the web site. Accordingly, Leshem et al. do not describe or suggest a server configured to electronically track, via the Web-based application, actions that include a decision regarding reviewing an idea and a decision regarding obtaining funding to implement the idea, wherein one of the actions occurs at a level within the business that is separate from any other levels within the business in which remaining of the actions occur. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 20 is submitted to be patentable over Leshem et al.

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Claims 21-32 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 20. When the recitations of Claims 21-32 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 20, Applicants submit that Claims 21-32 likewise are patentable over Leshem et al.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1-32 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1-35 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Leshem et al. in view of Myers et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,374,274) is respectfully traversed.

Leshem et al. is described above. Myers et al. describe a source disk (25) that contains data from a provider (13) in a plurality of document files, one or more index files, and one or more map files, illustrations, the map files defining links to related documents and images (column 4, lines 2-5). A document conversion process (50) that is operable when the source disk is mounted in a CD drive (24) (column 4, lines 18-20). A suitable word processor program is entered in a start word process step (54) and a conversion macro (56) is invoked for processing the source text (column 4, lines 24-27). Upon completion of the conversion macro, the document and index files, stored in HTML/ASP format are transmitted by any suitable means to a primary server (22A) (column 5, lines 62-65).

Claim 1 recites a method for facilitating Web-based information exchange, the method comprising "providing a centralized Web structure for the Web-based information of an organization, the Web structure comprising a plurality of Web sites linked together to form the Web structure; identifying a user requesting access to the Web structure by a password that is configured to be used for a limited time; and tracking, via the Web structure, a shift of responsibility of making a first decision on a funding request from a first user to a second user, wherein the shift occurs when a second decision is made on the funding request by the first user."

Neither Leshem et al. nor Myers et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a method for facilitating Web-based information exchange as recited in Claim 1. Specifically, neither Leshem et al. nor Myers et al., considered

alone or in combination, describe or suggest identifying a user requesting access to the Web structure by a password that is configured to be used for a limited time, and tracking, via the Web structure, a shift of responsibility of making a first decision on a funding request from a first user to a second user, where the shift occurs when a second decision is made on the funding request by the first user. Rather, Leshem et al. describe generating statistical data, such as, a number of "hits" or a number of exit events, with respect to each link and node of a web site, and attaching this information to corresponding node and edge objects of a site graph. Each site graph object corresponds generally to a map of the web site, and includes information about URLs and links of the web site. Myers et al. describe invoking a conversion macro for processing source text with a document and transmitting the document to a primary server upon completion of the conversion macro. Accordingly, neither Leshem et al. nor Myers et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest tracking, via the Web structure, a shift of responsibility of making a first decision on a funding request from a first user to a second user, where the shift occurs when a second decision is made on the funding request by the first user. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Leshem et al. in view of Myers et al.

Claims 2-12 and 33 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 2-12 and 33 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that Claims 2-12 and 33 likewise are patentable over Leshem et al. in view of Myers et al.

Claim 13 recites a method for facilitating Web-based information exchange, the method comprising "providing one Web structure for storing the Web-based information of a business; and electronically tracking, via a Web-based application, actions that include a decision regarding implementing an idea and a decision regarding obtaining funding to implement the idea, wherein one of the actions occurs at a level within the business that is separate from any other levels within the business in which remaining of the actions occur."

Neither Leshem et al. nor Myers et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a method for facilitating Web-based information exchange as

recited in Claim 13. Specifically, neither Leshem et al. nor Myers et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest electronically tracking, via a Web-based application, actions that include a decision regarding implementing an idea and a decision regarding obtaining funding to implement the idea, where one of the actions occurs at a level within the business that is separate from any other levels within the business in which remaining of the actions occur. Rather, Leshem et al. describe generating statistical data, such as, a number of "hits" or a number of exit events, with respect to each link and node of a web site, and attaching this information to corresponding node and edge objects of a site graph. Each site graph object corresponds generally to a map of the web site, and includes information about URLs and links of the web site. Myers et al. describe invoking a conversion macro for processing source text with a document and transmitting the document to a primary server upon completion of the conversion macro. Accordingly, neither Leshem et al. nor Myers et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest electronically tracking, via a Web-based application, actions that include a decision regarding implementing an idea and a decision regarding obtaining funding to implement the idea, where one of the actions occurs at a level within the business that is separate from any other levels within the business in which remaining of the actions occur. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 13 is submitted to be patentable over Leshem et al. in view of Myers et al.

Claims 34 and 35 have been canceled. Claims 14-18 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 13. When the recitations of Claims 14-18 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 13, Applicants submit that Claims 14-18 likewise are patentable over Leshem et al. in view of Myers et al.

Claim 19 recites a method for facilitating computer network-based information exchange, the method comprising the steps of "providing a plurality of sites for containing network-based information on a central server; linking the plurality of sites to one another so that any one of the sites is at least indirectly accessible from any one of the remaining sites; naming each of the plurality of sites on the central server wherein all of the plurality of names are based on a common theme and wherein each name identifies the network-based information stored at each site; identifying a user requesting access to one of the sites by a password that is

configured to be used for a limited time; and tracking, via the sites, a shift of responsibility of making a first decision on a funding request from a first user to a second user, wherein the shift occurs when a second decision is made on the funding request by the first user, and the first decision is made at a level within a business that is separate from other levels within the business at which the second decision is made."

Neither Leshem et al. nor Myers et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a method for facilitating computer network-based information exchange as recited in Claim 19. Specifically, neither Leshem et al. nor Myers et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest identifying a user requesting access to one of the sites by a password that is configured to be used for a limited time, and tracking, via the sites, a shift of responsibility of making a first decision on a funding request from a first user to a second user, where the shift occurs when a second decision is made on the funding request by the first user, and the first decision is made at a level within a business that is separate from other levels within the business at which the second decision is made. Rather, Leshem et al. describe generating statistical data, such as, a number of "hits" or a number of exit events, with respect to each link and node of a web site, and attaching this information to corresponding node and edge objects of a site graph. Each site graph object corresponds generally to a map of the web site, and includes information about URLs and links of the web site. Myers et al. describe invoking a conversion macro for processing source text with a document and transmitting the document to a primary server upon completion of the conversion macro. Accordingly, neither Leshem et al. nor Myers et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest tracking, via the sites, a shift of responsibility of making a first decision on a funding request from a first user to a second user, where the shift occurs when a second decision is made on the funding request by the first user, and the first decision is made at a level within a business that is separate from other levels within the business at which the second decision is made. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 19 is submitted to be patentable over Leshem et al. in view of Myers et al.

Claim 20 recites a system for facilitating Web-based information exchange, the system comprising "a device; and a server connected to said device and

configured to: provide a Web-based application including a centralized Web structure for Web-based information of a business, the Web structure comprising a plurality of Web sites linked together to form the Web structure; and electronically track, via the Web-based application, actions that include a decision regarding reviewing an idea and a decision regarding obtaining funding to implement the idea, wherein one of the actions occurs at a level within the business that is separate from any other levels within the business in which remaining of the actions occur."

Neither Leshem et al. nor Myers et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a system for facilitating Web-based information exchange as recited in Claim 20. Specifically, Leshem et al. do not describe or suggest a server configured to electronically track, via the Web-based application, actions that include a decision regarding reviewing an idea and a decision regarding obtaining funding to implement the idea, wherein one of the actions occurs at a level within the business that is separate from any other levels within the business in which remaining of the actions occur. Rather, Leshem et al. describe generating statistical data, such as, a number of "hits" or a number of exit events, with respect to each link and node of a web site, and attaching this information to corresponding node and edge objects of a site graph. Each site graph object corresponds generally to a map of the web site, and includes information about URLs and links of the web site. Myers et al. describe invoking a conversion macro for processing source text with a document and transmitting the document to a primary server upon completion of the conversion macro. Accordingly, neither Leshem et al. nor Myers et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a server configured to electronically track, via the Web-based application, actions that include a decision regarding reviewing an idea and a decision regarding obtaining funding to implement the idea, wherein one of the actions occurs at a level within the business that is separate from any other levels within the business in which remaining of the actions occur. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 20 is submitted to be patentable over Leshem et al. in view of Myers et al.

Claims 21-32 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 20. When the recitations of Claims 21-32 are considered in combination with the

recitations of Claim 20, Applicants submit that Claims 21-32 likewise are patentable over Leshem et al. in view of Myers et al.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1-35 be withdrawn.

Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1-35 is not a proper rejection. As is well established, obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings of the cited art to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching, suggestion, or incentive supporting the combination. Neither Leshem et al. nor Myers et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest the claimed combination. Furthermore, in contrast to the assertion within the Office Action, Applicants respectfully submit that it would not be obvious to one skilled in the art to combine Leshem et al. with Myers et al. because there is no motivation to combine the references suggested in the cited art itself.

As the Federal Circuit has recognized, obviousness is not established merely by combining references having different individual elements of pending claims. Ex parte Levengood, 28 U.S.P.Q.2d 1300 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1993). MPEP 2143.01. Rather, there must be some suggestion, outside of Applicants' disclosure, in the prior art to combine such references, and a reasonable expectation of success must be both found in the prior art, and not based on Applicants' disclosure. In re Vaeck, 20 U.S.P.Q.2d 1436 (Fed. Cir. 1991). In the present case, neither a suggestion or motivation to combine the prior art disclosures, nor any reasonable expectation of success has been shown.
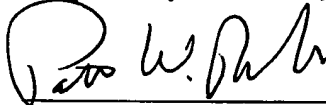
Furthermore, it is impermissible to use the claimed invention as an instruction manual or "template" to piece together the teachings of the cited art so that the claimed invention is rendered obvious. Specifically, one cannot use hindsight reconstruction to pick and choose among isolated disclosures in the art to deprecate the claimed invention. Further, it is impermissible to pick and choose from any one reference only so much of it as will support a given position, to the exclusion of other parts necessary to the full appreciation of what such reference fairly suggests to one of ordinary skill in the art. The present Section 103 rejection is based on a combination

of teachings selected from multiple patents in an attempt to arrive at the claimed invention. Specifically, Leshem et al. teach generating statistical data, such as, a number of "hits" or a number of exit events, with respect to each link and node of a web site, and attaching this information to corresponding node and edge objects of a site graph. Each site graph object corresponds generally to a map of the web site, and includes information about URLs and links of the web site. Myers et al. teach invoking a conversion macro for processing source text with a document and transmitting the document to a primary server upon completion of the conversion macro. Since there is no teaching nor suggestion in the cited art for the combination, the Section 103 rejection appears to be based on a hindsight reconstruction in which isolated disclosures have been picked and chosen in an attempt to deprecate the present invention. Of course, such a combination is impermissible, and for this reason alone, Applicants request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1-35 be withdrawn.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of Claims 1-35 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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